

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1 through 23 and 25 through 28 are pending, with Claims 1, 16, 27, and 28 being independent. Claim 24 has been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 2, 9, 11, 14, 16, 25, 27, and 28 have been amended.

In the April 7, 2005 final Official Action, Claims 1 through 28 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Figs. 15A through 15C of the subject application in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,682,559 (Yoshino, et al.) in further view of U.S. Patent Nos. 4,998,124 (Ishida, et al.), 5,404,152 (Nagai), 4,994,843 (Kitazawa), 4,520,240 (Swindler), 5,392,088 (Abe, et al.), and 5,895,130 (Saito, et al.). All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 16, 27, and 28 variously recite, inter alia, changing the main object area determined by the main object area determination unit (Claims 1 and 27) or in the main object area determination step (Claims 16 and 28) to another one of the object areas using information of the object areas grouped by the grouping unit (Claims 1 and 27) or in the grouping step (Claims 16 and 28), with focusing as claimed.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that none of Figs. 15A through 15C, Yoshino, et al., Ishida, et al., Nagai, Kitazawa, Swindler, Abe, et al., and Saito, et al., even in the proposed combinations, assuming, arguendo, that such could be combined, discloses or suggests at least the above-discussed combinations of claimed features as recited, inter alia, in Claims 1, 16, 27, and 28.

The Official Action acknowledges that Figs. 15A through 15C are silent as to changing the object area, and therefore relies upon Yoshino, et al. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Yoshino, et al. shows, e.g., in Fig. 7, that focus detection is performed using one of a plurality of predetermined focusing areas (e.g., Fig. 6), and next it is determined whether or not the detection area for performing focus detection has been changed, and if so (step #360), then detection is performed once again using the selected area (step #380), and Applicants respectfully submit that neither the foregoing nor the remainder of Yoshino, et al., or the other applied documents provides either a description or a suggestion of at least the above-discussed claimed combinations of claimed features.

It is further respectfully submitted that there has been no showing of any indication of motivation in the cited documents that would lead one having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the above-discussed claimed features.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daniel Glueck", positioned above a horizontal line.

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